

DOES BELONGING TO GROUPS IN SAINT MARTHA'S  
SETTLEMENT HOUSE, TEND TO FACILITATE  
ETHNIC GROUP RELATIONS?

A THESIS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	ii
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Significance of the Study . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	5
Method of Procedure . . . . .	5
Scope and Limitations . . . . .	6
Definitions. . . . .	6
II. BACKGROUND OF SAINT MARTHA'S HOUSE . . . . .	8
History of the Agency . . . . .	8
Purpose of the Agency . . . . .	9
Area Served . . . . .	11
Services Offered . . . . .	12
III. HOUSE PROGRAM . . . . .	15
Intake Process . . . . .	15
Program Offered. . . . .	16
Description of the Starlighters. . . . .	18
Description of the Teenagers . . . . .	20
IV. AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED RELATIONSHIP CRITERIA . . . . .	22
Cohesiveness in Terms of Attendance . . . . .	22
Cohesiveness in Terms of Activities . . . . .	27
V. AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE STARLIGHTERS AND THE TEENAGERS . . . . .	34
Relationship Between the Worker and the Group . . . . .	34
Relationship Toward Other Ethnic Groups. . . . .	39
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	49

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Cohesiveness in the Group in Relation to Attendance - Starlighters 1957-1958 . . . . .	25
2. Cohesiveness in the Group in Relation to Attendance - Teenagers 1958-1959 . . . . .	26

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance of the Study

All over the world the struggle for human dignity is in process. Although it varies in different places and expresses itself under different circumstances, primarily, the focus is upon the alleviation of discrimination and segregation. In the United States this is a national problem; however, it may be manifested differently in certain areas.

Many factors in the history of the United States have precipitated hostile feeling against races or ethnic groups. Among these factors, a major one is technological changes. These changes have been developing over many years, but have come with tremendous force in recent years. Along with technological change is the necessity for major population shifts, which take place in urban neighborhoods. This movement of people within a city emphasizes differences in patterns of thought and behavior. Frequently, as one racial or nationality population leaves a locality another moves into the vacant property. Differing as they may in customs and other factors the newcomers, initially, may appear and may be regarded as intruders. Since landlordship and maintenance shops are among the last to be relinquished by the older population, feelings in both groups are reinforced by economic pressures.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Deutschberger and Sophia Deutschberger, "Planning Intercultural Policy in the Neighborhood Agency," The Group (March, 1950), p. 7.

Social agencies, which function on a neighborhood basis in cities, have found it necessary to relate their programs to meeting the needs of newcomer groups, otherwise such agencies could find their programs unfit and their purposes thwarted. Therefore, such agencies with neighborhood centered activities have considered it essential to engage in interracial and intercultural work. Local agencies, because of their strategic position in the community, have a great deal to contribute toward the influencing of wholesome group attitudes.<sup>1</sup>

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Saint Martha's Settlement House on September 24, 1957, learned about disturbances in the vicinity of Broad and Synder which involved some violence among different groups of teenagers. There were rumors that Negro students at South Philadelphia High School were planning to go to school armed with weapons in order to defend themselves. A community worker from the agency was sent into the area to determine the situation and what could be done with the help of adults and parents in the area. It was found that there was considerable fear and concern by everyone. At a meeting with a local civic league, the fears and concerns were verbalized. The group asked for a meeting with the police captain which was a good means of improving communication between the people and the authorities. The Executive Director of Saint Martha's House, also called a meeting with the school District Supervisor, who recommended a conference with the school principal.

Some of the results of these meetings and consequences were as follows: teenagers were assured that something positive could be done; parents were able to list grievances with the principal and get assurance that something

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<sup>1</sup>

Ibid.

positice could be done. Four Negro parents consented to chaperon some of the school dances, police support was assured, settlement staff encouraged discussion on human relations and long range programs for better relations were discussed, lines of communication were improved.<sup>1</sup>

Individual behavior in many situations is predicted on understanding how organized groups deliberately defined those situations.

Groups, particularly small, face-to-face groups are shown to influence individual behavior profoundly, as the individual at the same time is influencing the group. Not only are individual values often acquired through group participation, but groups commonly set patterns of acceptable overt behavior, thus providing models of habits and practices that are powerful influences upon a considerable majority of youth and adults.<sup>2</sup>

With the agency's participation in dealing with the incidents, racial tensions were relieved and the agency's position clarified.

It is up to the agency to provide opportunities for satisfying group experiences so that the individual may have a concrete demonstration of his personal worth. With group support and social approval he may be rendered more free in his conduct outside of the agency.<sup>3</sup>

Social workers and social work agencies, in these times, are constantly confronted with rapid change and action in all parts of the country as well as in the world as a whole. The changes that occur and how we, as a democratic people, influence them in our special areas have repercussions in all parts of the world. An example could be that of the

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Report of Teen-age Flareups in South Philadelphia with Reference to the Role of Saint Martha's House Staff in Working With This Situation, October, 1957.

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Ralph W. Tyler, "Implications of Research in the Behavioral Sciences for Group Life and Group Services," The Social Welfare Forum, 1960 (New York, 1960), p. 115.

3

Paul Deutschberger and Sophia Deutschberger, op. cit., p. 10.

recent student movements going on in the South and throughout the world. The desires and wants of these young people are being transferred to others and engaged in all over the world.

Changes in legal interpretation often symbolizes new landmarks in social attitudes. The high courts and action groups have stood for definite modification of practices as undemocratic. Minority groups have accepted democracy in both form and content; hence, practices that have fallen short of the ideal of democracy have been challenged.<sup>1</sup>

A belief in the American Heritage, "with Liberty and Justice for all," and the teachings from the Judaeo-Christian faiths, that all men are children of God, should compel us as social workers to bring our actual practice closer to the beliefs of the profession.<sup>2</sup>

Social workers and social work agencies are continually taking an active role in the process of intergroup relations, whether they admit it or not. It is deemed inevitable for the reasons following:

First, our conviction as to the worth of the individual and our commitment as social workers to work for the self-fulfillment of the individual and increased social well-being require it as a matter of conscience.

Second, our social work agencies as an important part of the social fabric and community life cannot isolate themselves from social change of so significant character.

Third, social work has insights and skills that help in the process of change and ease the adjustment involved.<sup>3</sup>

The writer impressed with the unlimited insights and skills available to the social worker in the easing of adjustments to new situations, recognized the importance of cohesive intergroup understanding. The writer

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<sup>1</sup> Edward D. McDonogh and Eugene S. Richards, Ethnic Relations in the United States (New York, 1953), p. 381.

<sup>2</sup> Savilla Millis Simons, "Desegregation and Integration in Social Work," Social Work, Vol. 1 (October, 1957), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



also having encountered practitioners sensitive to questioning in reference to intergroup relations, questioned whether or not the basic social work principles were neglected in daily practice. If so, the study of intergroup relations is of merit and worth, as a device for reminding and for the further improvement of the professional's role in intergroup relations. Therefore, the writer recognized the need for additional written materials in this field.

While performing field work in Saint Martha's House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, some opportunity was provided the writer to participate in and observe groups of mixed ethnic affiliations. Consequently this study was undertaken to analyze some of the aspects of belonging to groups of different ethnic origins.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out whether or not belonging to groups facilitated relationships of children with other ethnic groups. Some area of the lacks of material in this general respect concerning the nature of intergroup relations and activity seemed to establish and add to the possible value in this purpose.

#### Method of Procedure

Several procedures of collecting data for this study were used. Literature pertinent to the subject of intergroup relations, as well as, materials in the area of group work was consulted. Agency publications and other written material concerning the agency were used.

Agency group records of the two selected groups were analyzed with special attention being given to attendance, activities, relationship of the worker and the group, and the member to member relationship.

Unstructured interviews were held with the agency director and staff members concerning policies and techniques that were used to enhance inter-group relations in Saint Martha's House.

Open interviews with staff persons of other Philadelphia agencies were held concerning their agency policies and techniques used to enhance inter-group relations.

### Scope and Limitations

The groups studied were in existence during the years 1957-1958 and 1958-1959. The group in existence during 1957-1958 was called the "Starlighters" and was composed of sixteen Negro girls between the ages of twelve to fifteen. The group in existence during 1958-1959 was called the "Teenagers" and was an interracial group composed of eighteen girls between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

Children between the ages of six and sixteen were preferred as a sample group, because the association patterns of this group are not generally restricted as much as those of younger individuals and not as fixed as those of older persons.

### Definitions

Belonging - Holding membership at Saint Martha's. Being aware membership requires of him certain kinds of conduct, attitudes and responses to situations important to the group as a whole.

Group - Two or more persons in a relationship of psychic interaction, whose relationship with one another may be abstracted and distinguished from their relationships with all others so that

they must be thought of as an entity.<sup>1</sup>

The group was organized by the agency with a leader provided by it.

Facilitating relationships - Making easy or less difficult those primary emotional responses that ebb and flow as human behavior evokes different reactions.

Other ethnic groups - Racial group other than the one to which an individual belongs racially.

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Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, Social Group Work Practice (Cambridge, 1949), p. 44 - taken from Earl Eubank, The Concept of Sociology (Boston, 1932), p. 163.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND OF SAINT MARTHA'S HOUSE

#### History of the Agency

Saint Martha's House was dedicated by Bishop Whitaker in 1901 - a gift of Samuel Houston, of Chestnut Hill to the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Saint Martha's House was located at Eighth Street and Synder Avenue in the South-eastern part of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was a non-profit organization.

The gift of Saint Martha's House by Mr. Houston was a memorial to his first wife, Edith Corlies Houston. Its relationship to the Diocese of Pennsylvania was very close in light of the fact the Bishop was named in the Charter as the Chairman of its Board. During the agencies early years, until it became a part of the Welfare Federation (now the United Fund), much of its support came from the Woman's Auxiliary of the Episcopal churches. However, the agency was strictly non-sectarian in program. Voluntary religious services were held in the building in the "Little" Chapel for the convenience of the residents.

The residents did work very closely with the All Saint Parish at Eleventh Street and Synder Avenue, helping particularly in the Sunday School until the expanded work at the agency made this a burden and this cooperation was discontinued. Nevertheless, the religious influence could be identified in the agency functioning. The garb of Deaconess Colesbury, the Head Resident, and the cross on the front door were the only identification with

the church shown to the neighbors.<sup>1</sup>

In 1901, Saint Martha's House consisted of a corner store and an adjoining house. In 1907, Saint Martha's Auxiliary erected the first large building on Synder Avenue, from the proceeds of the Diocesan Fair and other donations. In 1913, Mr. and Mrs. Houston secured funds for the erection of a large \$60,000.00 modern equipped and handsome settlement house. Four houses on Eighth Street were torn down and the new building placed there.<sup>2</sup> In 1941, final expansion was completed when the property adjoining Eighth Street was brought, modernized and connected to comprise the present Saint Martha's House. It was named Colesbury House in honor of the first Head Resident. It housed the arts and crafts room, a kitchen for cooking classes and an apartment for members of the staff.<sup>3</sup>

Saint Martha's was an original member of the Association of Philadelphia Settlements and has retained membership in the Philadelphia Health and Welfare Council, Incorporated, the National Federation of Settlements and the National Conference of Social Welfare.<sup>4</sup>

#### Purpose of the Agency

Charity and philanthropy were the keystones of early activities at

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Martha's Settlement House, "Social Audit Statement" (Philadelphia: November, 1956), p. 1, as taken from Zollie Stringer, "A Trend in Settlement Work; 'Grass Roots' Leadership Among Civic Groups Having a Minimum Staff Supervision," Unpublished Masters thesis, Atlanta University, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Saint Martha's House, "Silver Anniversary of Saint Martha's House," 1901-26, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Saint Martha's Settlement House, "The First Fifty Years," Saint Martha's House Area Commission Release, Philadelphia, 1951, taken from Elsie "allory" "Effects of Community Conditions on Settlement Program," 1950-55, Unpublished Masters thesis, Atlanta University, 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Standards for Neighborhood Centers, National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, 1960, p. 6.

Saint Martha's. Social work was rendered through the provision of the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and education. Studying the evolution of the purpose, the writer observed the awareness of the early workers at Saint Martha's House of the people around it and of their needs. The earlier purpose of Saint Martha's House was as follows:

1. The improvement of the spiritual, moral intellectual and physical conditions of all who come within the range of its influence, and especially of those who live in the immediate neighborhood of the House.

2. To give further training in Christian work to the graduates of the Church training and Deaconess House in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and others.<sup>1</sup>

Community conditions consisting of poor housing, inadequate wages, lack of health facilities and extensive unemployment, Saint Martha's House attempted to alleviate such conditions by providing among its activities clothing, distribution, coal, fuel, medical services, etc. during depressed times.<sup>2</sup>

The Settlement's program of service and action was determined by the needs of the people in the neighborhood.

The neighborhood center differs from other agencies and organizations serving people in neighborhoods in its concern for the neighborhood life as a whole. The neighborhood, a living social and economic entity, its "clients." The center serves as a catalytic agent in the neighborhood, utilizing and developing the dynamic interplay<sup>3</sup> of all people there for the improvement of neighborhood life.

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Charter of Saint Martha's House of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1901 (Unpublished).

2

Ibid.

3

Standards for Neighborhood Centers, op. cit., p. 6.

With the passing of years the purpose was restated keeping in mind the needs of the neighborhood and in accord with a cooperative study sponsored by the community chest, the Philadelphia Health and Welfare Council and the Philadelphia Association of Settlements in 1948-49. Guided by the recommendations made in the study, the purpose of Saint Martha's House was amended as follows:

1. To assist the individual to develop to his fullest potential so that he may work most effectively as a member of his group.
2. To integrate the surrounding community into a Neighborhood conscious of its resources and needs and willing to work toward them.<sup>1</sup>

#### Area Served

Saint Martha's Settlement House was situated in the South-southeast area of the Southern area of the Philadelphia District Health and Welfare Council, Incorporated. The service area for Saint Martha's was the northern boundary at Mifflin Street and south to the Navy Yard, east to the river and west to Broad Street. Saint Martha's House was also a member of the Southwark Community Council whose boundaries extended north to Tasker Street. Saint Martha's did not form groups in this area, but if something should develop in connection with the Council, they work in this area.<sup>2</sup>

In this area served by Saint Martha's House, there were two other agencies, the Boys' Club and Neighborhood Center South. The Boys' Club served boys only and boys in a certain age group. Neighborhood Center

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<sup>1</sup>

Saint Martha's House Annual Report, 1958-59 (Mimeographed).

<sup>2</sup>

Statement by Charles Cacace, Executive Director, Saint Martha's House, Personal Interview (January, 1961).

South served predominantly the Jewish portion of the neighborhood. Saint Martha's House served the residents of the area that did not fall into those classifications.<sup>1</sup>

The populations of this area was approximately 66-70,000 and comprised almost exclusively of low income and lower-middle class families.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the unfavorable economic status of the residents of the area, the population had a history of instability and change. As of the Census of 1930, the Italians were the predominate nationality in this area, representing more than one-half in both foreign born and native white of foreign or mixed parentage.<sup>3</sup> However, the population of Saint Martha's immediate neighborhood was forty per cent American of Italian descent, forty per cent Negro and twenty per cent Jewish.

The immediate neighborhood surrounding Saint Martha's House, at the time of this study, may be described as over-crowded and compact. Every available building with space was being utilized for residences with the exception of a small industrial and commercial area which included street markets along Seventh Street. The streets tended to be narrow; however, since establishment of the "clean block" program the litter and trash that once was characteristic of the block was no longer evidenced.

#### Services Offered

The program offered by Saint Martha's House is founded on the

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid.

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Philadelphia Health and Welfare Council, Incorporated, "Southeast Area Summary and Analysis of the Data Collected from Various Sources Relating to the Composition of the Southeast Area," Passim (Unpublished).



premises of Service and Involvement. Services are based on an on-going knowledge of this community and spiced with the flexibility to make changes when neighborhood conditions and people so indicate. Through involvement of neighborhood people at all levels of planning, we work together to provide for the common good.<sup>1</sup>

The services offered at Saint Martha's House included: house program, music, Day camp, and community services.

The House program was made up of club and interest groups. The groups were small so that the adult advisor to each group could get to know each child and determine how he could be of help to the individual. The values of a program of this type are as follows: to widen the member's interest, to increase their skills, to learn with others to give and take of life, to come in contact and better understand people of different backgrounds and, of course, have fun. The House program was divided into two divisions, Afternoon House and Evening House. The Afternoon House program served children between the ages of six and eleven, the Evening House program served teen-agers, adult clubs and classes.<sup>2</sup>

The music department in its attempt to teach piano, tried to enable the child to reach a point where he could study and learn to play acceptably, and to love and appreciate beautiful music. In addition to this service, pianos were placed in homes on a loan basis. Pupils who had shown interest and responsibility and a keen willingness to study were eligible for this service.

The Day Camp program was a summer program that provided children between the ages of nine and twelve, with a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Martha's Settlement House, Annual Report, 1958-59, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The community services program included several local civic groups and/or special projects which involved between 700-800 people. This program stimulated initiative, discovered and utilized indigenous leadership among neighborhood residents in solving problems related to deficiencies in services and resources.<sup>1</sup>

General services provided by Saint Martha's House included the provision of meeting and assembly rooms for various neighborhood groups which were unaffiliated with the settlement. The House also provided individual counseling and consultation too, the making and accepting of referrals to and from agencies for services in the immediate and wider community were an integral phase in the agency's program.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### HOUSE PROGRAM

#### Intake Process

The intake process at Saint Martha's House for several years had been conducted through a registration plan. Any child desiring to join one or more of the House program activities was invited to come on a specified day and to fill out the intake form, with the help of one of the leaders. Registration days were announced through fliers, local newspapers and school assemblies, for both Afternoon and Evening program activities.

At intake in Saint Martha's House, the leader who was to be in charge of the group was usually on hand to answer questions about the group and to meet the children. The younger children were channelled into the play groups which were "designed to help children to learn to get along with others and to give them a sense of good sportsmanship and fair play, that will stand by them through life."<sup>1</sup> All of the children were assigned to groups according to age.<sup>2</sup>

The teen-agers followed the same procedure as the younger children. Here the groups were on-going and the children signed up for the same groups year after year.

For most group members, the initial point of the intake process of becoming related to a leisure-time agency comes at the time when the person appears at the doors of the agency to signify his

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<sup>1</sup>

Saint Martha's House, Brochure (1958).

<sup>2</sup>

Statement by Burrell Brown, Program Director, Saint Martha's House, Personal Interview (January, 1961).

interest in "joining" a club, or team, or class or troop.<sup>1</sup>

An increasing number of agencies require something more than just "signing up" for activities. A well-defined intake process has grown out of the initial contact, or of the renewed approach at the beginning of the program year, to the quality of the on-going relationship to the agency.<sup>2</sup>

The motivations of potential members as they seek admission to an agency are varied. The members, who come to the House, register with no apparent knowledge that they might have a problem. Whereas in a casework agency, the client realizes his problem and comes to the agency for help. With this in mind, the intake process is classified as a very important first step in relating the group member to the agency.

#### Program Offered

In 1957-58, the total number of groups both "on-going" and temporary existing at Saint Martha's was thirty-five and involved working with 700 to 800 people. These groups were divided by the meeting time schedule of the agency as Afternoon House groups and Evening House groups. In 1958-59 there were thirty-nine groups. In 1958-59 out of sixteen Afternoon groups eleven were racially and culturally mixed. In 1959-60 out of sixteen Afternoon groups seven were racially and culturally mixed.

In 1958-59 approximately 204 children enrolled in Afternoon program. Sixty-six per cent of the members were Negro and thirty-four per cent were white children. There were noticeable drop-outs of white children during the program year. This represented approximately twenty per cent of the white membership, leaving the over-all picture seventy-five per cent Negro and twenty-five per cent white. Drop-outs of white membership occurred primarily in large groups of predominantly Negro members. Very special

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Phillips, Essentials of Social Group Work Skill (New York, 1957), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

selection, racially, was made for three groups. In these groups drop-outs of white members was negligible.<sup>1</sup>

In 1959-60 the ratio of Negro members to white members was approximately the same as it was in 1958-59. Of the Evening House groups, at this time, there were seventeen of which two were racially mixed, one of these was an adult group. The membership ratio of the Evening House program was fifty-seven per cent Negro and forty-three per cent white.<sup>2</sup>

The agency offered a choice of friendship and interest groups.

A friendship group is the type of group in which the members can feel the security given by voluntary acceptance by friends, and where they can develop a sense of group loyalty, the ability to exercise group discipline, and agree cooperatively upon and pursue a common objective. An interest group brings together people from various friendship groups on the basis of their interest in a given activity. These groups are more likely to be heterogeneous in culture or race than are friendship group lines. In providing adequately for association across friendship group lines, this type of activity has proven very effective.<sup>3</sup>

The House activities offered were: workshop, art, modern dancing, dramatics, music, House Council, forums and discussions, basketball, baseball, informal lounge, gameroom activities which include table tennis, pool and other table games. These activities were mainly for the younger children and the teen-agers.

The adult program was limited to three groups. The Martha-rettles were composed of Day Camp children's mothers, who, as one of their many and varied projects, worked throughout the year to raise money for Day Camp.

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1

Donna Bridenbaugh, Evaluation of 1958-59 House Program.

2

Burrell Brown, op. cit.

3

Statement of Purposes and Functions of Settlements (Executive and Staff Members Committee of Cleveland Federation of Settlements, June 17, 1946), p. 1 (Mimeographed), taken from Blanch Coombs, "A Study of the Need of Interracial Experiences Revealed by the Reaction of Children," (Unpublished Masters thesis, Atlanta University, 1950).

The Daughters of America had been meeting in the House for years and comprised older Italian women. The other group for adults was the Golden Age Club, which was culturally mixed.

Two of the Evening teen-age groups, the Starlighters and the Teenagers, were used for the study. A brief description of the two groups follows.

#### Description of the Starlighters

The Starlighters were an agency formed group made up of sixteen Negro girls. Due to dropouts and new members enrolling, the total enrollment of the group for the year was sixteen. However, the average enrollment of the group at any one time was never more than eleven.

An all Negro group was studied because the knowledge of group work has verified the benefit of the method to groups regardless of racial character. It was hoped that the writer of this study would determine aspects of belonging in a non-racially mixed group in relation to those in a mixed group. Furthermore, there was awareness that some individuals of minority groups cannot move with ease into wider associations until they have gained self-esteem as members of their own group.

It is essential for the social group worker to understand both the psychodynamics of human behavior and the operation of factors of difference in the life of the community in order to handle feelings of considerable hostility expressed by the members of the minority group. Frustration breeds hostility and aggression, and members of minority groups are continually subjected to frustrating experiences. Many members of minority groups are extremely reluctant to join intercultural groups; they have had little occasion to trust the members of the majority group and they fear the loss of status within their own cultural group if they are known to associate with the majority group.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>

Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., pp. 122-23.

The gang feeling in the area served by Saint Martha's House was rather intensive. The "we" feeling was felt by all, girls and boys alike, as characterized by the following excerpt from the Starlighters:

H., G., R., and F. were the first of the members to arrive. When they first came in H. and the others were talking about a fight they and some of the other members were in at school with some white boys. C. and the others arrived as they were discussing the incident. C. said that she did not think her mother would let her go to school the next day. I asked them what had happened and H. said some white boys came over and started a fight with some of the boys at her school. She said one of the boys was from her street and she jumped in to help him out and one of the white boys punched her in the face. I asked if the boys attended the school she attended? She said, that one of them did, but the others were grown men who started the fight.

The "we" feeling can be found in many racial groups. To "stray from the gang" or "hand around" with another gang, could cause one to be ostracized by his own gang. In order to stay "in" with the gang the members usually conform. The gang has its own set of norms, manners, language and law.<sup>1</sup>

There was very little "straying" done by the teen-agers in this area. However, there were a few who did seek other groups for various reasons. When they leave the group they do stand the chance of being ostracized as an outsider, but with time this passes.

...human behavior is shaped jointly by two sets of factors that are both organically related to the social environment: those coming from within ... and those received from contacts with the group. Both sets have to be taken into account to explain any human reaction.<sup>2</sup>

The Starlighters were a friendship group and which met at the agency once a week. The primary motivation that brought the group together was

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<sup>1</sup> Muzafer Sherif, "Light from Psychology on Intercultural Relations," Cultural Groups and Human Relations (New York, 1951), p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

a desire of the members to be together and have "fun." Most of the girls in the group had been members of other groups in the House, prior to this group experience.

The professional leadership of the group had changed three times. The first leader was a white, female, part-time worker; the second was a Negro, female, social work student; and the third was the former who returned. This change in leadership had a great deal to do with the stability in attendance of the group at certain times. The age range of the group was between twelve to fifteen years old.

The group had many subgroups which were constantly changing. The bond between the members was rather close. This was due, in part, to the fact that they all lived in or around the same neighborhood.

#### Description of the Teenagers

The Teenagers were an agency formed interracial group, comprising eighteen girls, fourteen of whom were Negro and four who were white. Due to dropouts and new members' enrolling, the total enrollment of the group for the year was eighteen. However, the average enrollment of the group, at any one time, was never more than twelve.

When the group was first organized there was only one white member. Within one month she had invited three others to join the group. The group met once a week and planned and engaged in its activities at that time.

The Teenagers had had only two leaders, the first was a Negro, female, graduate social work student and the second was white, female, part-time paid worker. As in the Starlighters the change in leaders, which occurred in March, had a drastic influence on the attendance of the group. However, this was something that all of the groups in the House program experienced,



some clubs survive the changes in leaderships, others do not.

The writer having herself had to terminate with groups, is fully aware of the methods a social worker uses to help a group terminate. These j might include; a closing party or program of some type, a recapitulation with the group on what the group has meant to them, the good or bad experiences in the group and planning for the future using the past experiences as a focal point. However, the writer having encountered the situation at Saint Martha's House in which leaders were changed every semester, twice a year, questions whether or not the previously stated ways of termination are sufficient to insure continuation of participation by the group members.

It was evident in this study that when the professional leadership changed the attendance and participation in the groups studied was greatly reduced. The lack of material in this field limits the writer's factual criteria as a basis, however, there are indications that consistent leadership can serve as a basis for developing a stronger feeling of belonging on the part of the children.

## CHAPTER IV

### AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED RELATIONSHIP CRITERIA

#### Cohesiveness in Terms of Attendance

In attempting to analyze the record material for this study, the writer selected certain criteria which had been suggested by writers in the group work field, as evidence of a degree of cohesiveness or as essentials in facilitating bonds.

People are just naturally drawn together into groups. Each person in our society spends the greater part of his time with other people whether at home, school, church, work or in his leisure time.<sup>1</sup>

When persons join a group, they do not join a building or a program, they join with other persons who are working toward an ideal or purpose. Hence, belonging refers to "a quality of human relations among people. Persons who really belong to a group develop an inner feeling or warmth, pride, sharing, devotion, affection and respect with reference to the others and the purpose of the group."<sup>2</sup>

Belonging is a voluntary response, freely given. It calls for something, on the part of the person who wishes to belong and also on the part of the group. Real belonging is living companionship or fellowship between people.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Harleigh B. Trecker, *Social Group Work*, passim (New York, 1955), p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

In this study the word cohesiveness was used in describing attendance and activities. Cohesiveness means, "the attraction of the group for its members."<sup>1</sup> The most straightforward test of whether or not a person is attracted to his group would be his behavior with respect to membership in group given free choice.

In fact, the greater the degree of cohesiveness in the group, the more powerful is the group as a force for behavior change. Without sufficient cohesiveness, or relationship, between members the group may lack force and will therefore, function less vitally in the lives of the members.<sup>2</sup>

Given free choice an individual who remains a member of the group would be said to have a stronger resultant force acting on him to remain in the group than would an individual who leaves the group.

While this operational criterion of attraction seems to have the disadvantages of providing only for dichotomous classification, it is possible to conceive of a more continuous range of attraction behavior by using attendance data.<sup>3</sup>

The writer will show this attraction by using the attendance data of the Starlighters and the Teenagers. The following tables are explained in the following way:

1. On the basis of attendance, the members who attend four out of four meetings per month, show an attraction to the group.

Those attending so regularly show a deep relationship to each other and find attractiveness in the group, which is shown in his behavior in terms of attendance.

2. Those attending two out of four meetings or less, will be

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<sup>1</sup> Lester Libo, Measuring Group Cohesiveness (University of Michigan, 1953), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Harleigh B. Trecker, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Lester Libo, op. cit., p. 14.

considered not interested, even isolates. Isolates because they do not relate to anyone in the group, derived no satisfaction in being members as expressed in their attendance.

A limitation that is to be kept in mind is that there are other reasons persons do not attend meetings, for instance, duties at home, not being able to come out, illness, etc. However, these were not stated in all of the records; therefore, the writer followed the above assumption with all limitations in mind.

Table 1, page 25, showed, in the Starlighters, an all Negro group, the low attraction for the eight month period totaled thirty-nine. Table 2, page 26, showed in the Teenagers, a racially mixed group, the low attraction for the eight month period totaled forty-two. The high number for low attraction indicates belongingness has not been developed to a high degree. This can be said for the Teenagers and the Starlighters.

The feeling of belonging<sup>1</sup> to a group is a gradual process for the individual. However, the social worker, being aware of the purposeful nature of human behavior knows that each member needs something which he proposed to get from his participation with the group.<sup>2</sup> "Belonging is essentially an emotional experience."<sup>3</sup>

When group workers talk about membership and its meaning they are not referring to membership campaigns, or drives. They are not talking about the act of handing over a sum of money and receiving a card to carry in wallet or purse. They are not talking about the buying of services or privileges, worthy and legitimate

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<sup>1</sup>  
Definition, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>  
Harleigh B. Trecker, op. cit., pp. 167-69.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid, p. 113.

TABLE 1  
COHESIVENESS IN THE GROUP IN RELATION TO ATTENDANCE  
Starlighters 1957-58

	October		November		December		January		February		March		April		May		Total
	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	
High Attractiveness Present four out of four Meetings and Three out of Four Meetings			2				12		6		6		5		7		38
Low Attractiveness Present Two out of Four Meetings and One out of Four Meetings			4		8		1		6		6		7		7		39

N = Negro  
W = White

TABLE 2  
COHESIVENESS IN THE GROUP IN RELATION TO ATTENDANCE  
Teenagers 1958-59

	October		November		December		January		February		March		April		May		Total
	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	
High Attractiveness Present four Out of Four Meetings and Three out of Four Meetings	2		2	1	2	3	7		2				8				27
Low Attractiveness Present two Out of Four Meetings and One Out of Four Meetings	2	4	6	1	6	1	3	1	8	3	6		1				42

N = Negro  
W = White

as these may be. They are talking about a psychological process of growth in human relationships through which members become belongers. Real belonging is living companionship, or fellowship between people.

### Cohesiveness in Terms of Activities

The members of the group reveal their personality patterns through the way in which they engage in activities. These personality patterns often indicate the help needed and are often ways of asking for help. Activities provide a chance to express friendliness and affection, as well as indifferences or open hostility toward others. Individuals are given acceptance from the other members through their skill in activities or their willingness to cooperate with the group on special projects. Integration of the group is often achieved through activities. Group morale is high when the members have a good time together, develop a successful party, or participate in a public performance.<sup>2</sup>

Social group workers are interested in helping the normal person to maintain mental health and cognizant of the potentialities of activities to serve this purpose. Activities further possess:

...potentialities for aiding physical growth and neuromuscular control and for providing intellectual stimulation and development. The release of emotions is also made possible, for the activities provide forms through which feelings may be acceptably expressed. Further, activities contribute to emotional and social development by providing patterns and disciplines which influence and limit behavior and provide security for the members by indicating the kind of behavior expected.<sup>3</sup>

In the area of intercultural groups, as well as one culture groups,

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<sup>1</sup> Harleigh B. Trecker, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

the activities should be so directed that everyone gets a chance to participate, show some skill, or get some enjoyment from it. However, the worker in an intercultural group must be skilled.

...in helping members to move from participation for personal satisfaction to concern for the welfare of the group...he must be adequate to handle situations as they arise and not given to postponing them...he must show no partiality and must maintain his professional responsibility to each member.<sup>1</sup>

The quotation from Wilson and Ryland can be illustrated in an excerpt from the Teenagers. The S. twins are white members, but they could be of any ethnic group. The leader describes the twins, their attitude and her role in the following way:

The S. twins are as yet not too closely identified with the club or with Saint Martha's. This is seen in their questions regarding the skating (they come mainly when some recreational activity was being held) and in the comment made regarding the usefulness of taking pains in making the first bean bags. My asking them to participate on the committee and to bring cakes for the Christmas party was an effort to involve them more deeply in the club and to give them status and responsibility.

The social worker works with the group as a whole at its own level and helps members to develop program significant to their needs and interests.

Briefly the Starlighters' activities were as follows:

November - Major plans for future group activities were discussed, including a Christmas party and a picnic. The group also engaged in gameroom and lounge activities.

December - The group planned a party, which was a success. The group also engaged in gameroom and lounge programs. The gameroom activities included, pool, table tennis and other table games.

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<sup>1</sup>

Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 129.



January - The meetings were still centered in giving dances and parties. When the group was not planning for the dance they would use the gameroom and lounge.

February - The group used the gameroom and the lounge, where the members engaged in dancing and skating.

March - The group spent the month planning for a dance. Between the plans for the dance and the actual dance the group spent some time in the gym.

April - The group evaluated the dance and began planning for a fashion show. The group continued to use the lounge, gym and gameroom.

May - The group continued planning and practicing for the Fashion show, at the end of the month it was held and was a major success. The group continued plans for the future which included a hayride.

In the Starlighters the major activities, such as the Christmas party, picnic, dances and fashion show were centered largely in building the groups' own individual relationships. However, the groups' participation in gameroom and lounge programs, meeting after meeting, was the one indication of some associations with groups outside its own.

In summary, the activities were chosen by the group, but the activities chosen were not the type that would bring the group into contact with other groups. However, the intra-agency programs and the gameroom activities did bring the group into contact with other groups, but they were quite limited.

The worker makes extensive use of the environment to stimulate new program activities. The equipment and facilities of the agency-gymnasium, swimming pool, gameroom, record player, library, kitchen, craft shop, and the like will inevitably suggest certain activities to the group members. When the agency does not provide special

equipment and personnel, the worker can help the group to use community facilities and to enlist the aid of specialist outside of the agency.<sup>1</sup>

The members themselves constitute a part of the environment. Some of them have special abilities which will stimulate program for all. The worker is a part of the environment and his special interests and abilities contribute to the group. He, too, adds to the program of the group.

Briefly, the Teenagers' activities were as follows:

October - The group began making plans for the future. They engaged in a cooking activity, used the gym and the lounge.

November - The group had a small party with invited guests. The group engaged in a service project, which included making bean bags for the children in one of the local hospitals. The members also participated in two intra-group activities. This involved activities with the boys' group that met at the same time.

December - The group planned a spaghetti dinner with one of the boys' groups, which experienced a success. The Teenagers skated in the lounge, and, as one of the House groups, participated in the neighborhood Christmas caroling, with some of the other House groups.

January - The group skated again, used the gym to play volleyball planned and carried out a party.

February - The group planned a Pajama Party and had a cake and candy sale.

March - The group, in the process of reorganization with a new

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<sup>1</sup>

Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 129.

leader, spent most of the month using the gym and gameroom facilities.

April - The group did another service project. The group expressed a desire to have another dance, however, this was not carried through.

In the Teenagers the major activities such as, cooking, dances, the Pajama Party were activities centered largely in building the groups own individual relationships. However, the Teenagers engaged in several activities outside of the gameroom and lounge type programs. The service project involved the group in contacts with persons outside of the agency and themselves. The spaghetti dinner, carol singing and the cake and candy sale were activities that involved the group in association with groups outside of themselves.

Up until January this group, the Teenagers, was an interracial group, but after the holidays this ceased to be. The possible causes could be related to the lack of a feeling of belonging and also the type of activities engaged in by the group. With interracial groups activities which involve physical contact as first activities, should be redirected, or channeled in other directions. Physical contact appears to be the first area in which prejudice or withdrawal is expressed as exhibited by the girls in this group.

November 4, 1958

The party went well. The girls never seemed to get tired of dancing, (everyone danced though C.G. and her sister, whom she brought as her guest were somewhat reluctant at first, as were D.G. and P.S.). When I suggested some games at one point even though the girls were interested the three boys were not.

The fact that interracial sex attraction exists is proved by the millions of mixed breeds in the country...this common cross-race sexual fascination seldom expresses itself normally. The mixed dating of adolescents is virtually a social impossibility.

Legal intermarriage, where possible at all, is rare and is bedeviled by social complications that create grave problems even for the most devoted couples. Hence, sexual liaisons are clandestine, illicit, and accompanied by feelings of guilt... The psychodynamics process that relates this sexual situation to prejudice may be described separately for the white female and white male. (It must, of course, be understood that not every individual is affected the same way; but the process is probably common enough to be an important factor in the establishment and maintenance of prejudice.<sup>1</sup>

In December the group had its first party. Three of the white members attended, one brought a guest. However, none of the girls participated in the dancing, but they did help with the food service and spent the remainder of the time observing.

When planning a party for an interracial group, the worker should be aware of the different attitudes involved, what this social affair would mean to the groups involved, and the overall attitudes of persons in the group and those who might be visiting. The following is an excerpt from the Soho Community House in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania:

Clubs which are integrated tend to break up when the youngsters become teenagers, although friendly relations are maintained within the house as members come to participate in evening program. One interesting variation of the usual pattern occurred a few years ago when an interracial club continued to meet after the members had become adolescents. Knowing that any dances announced as open to the public might have a racially mixed attendance, they continued to have dances but by written agreement and word of mouth communication, some were attended by Negroes and others by whites. The sponsoring club still interracial, however, in that white members would help in putting on the dance on what became by tacit agreement, the Negro night and vice versa. No generalization can be drawn from this experience except that one should never underestimate the ingenuity of teen-agers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>

Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 374-75.

<sup>2</sup>

Arthur Hillman, "An Evolving Policy for Integrated Service," Neighborhood Centers Today (New York, 1960), pp. 155-56.

The illustration could in no way be applied to Saint Martha's, but it was a way that a dance situation was alleviated. Subconsciously, this may have been the situation at this party, but it was not reciprocal as it was in the illustration.

Activities of interracial groups should be directed. The leader watches for opportunities to make suggestions in keeping with this knowledge of the deeper needs of the members. When the group shows no readiness for an idea, it is dropped and possibly pursued later. If not, there is the possibility that later a suggestion related to the earlier idea will be offered, and the group will be ready for the experience. This helps to expand the interests of the group, their thinking is deepened and their sense of social responsibility is strengthened.<sup>1</sup>

As the young persons grow older his peer group often becomes very important to him. In it his quest for participation, acceptance, belongingness, a relationship to which he will have status. These groups, with mature adult leadership can provide democratic processes which may lead him through self-directing experiences toward satisfying maturity.<sup>2</sup>

The individual with social experience in both the majority and minority groups, with social and personal development adequate for their ages, are the ones from which the leadership in the development of better intercultural relations must come. Of course, helping people to join groups of this nature is only a first step. The entire process of intercultural education is a long, slow one, and it involves many experiences in various situations. Attitudes are held dearly by all human beings; and many feelings rise to protect them.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William Kilpatrick and William Van Til, Intercultural Attitudes in the Making (New York, 1960), pp. 155-56.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 125.

## CHAPTER V

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE STARLIGHTERS AND THE TEENAGERS

#### Relationship Between the Worker and the Group

Up to this point, the attractiveness of the groups in terms of attendance and the type of activity has been discussed. These involved the worker and his role as attendance keeper, a requirement of the agency, and the worker and how he enables the group to chose activities. The worker is very important in the life of the group. He serves many purposes; a teacher, a substitute parent, a friend and most of all the enabler.

The one characteristic of social group work skill truly unique to it among the social work specializations is the stimulation and conscious use of group relations in process with the worker, toward the goal of social growth of the person and group served.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from focusing his efforts on reciprocal relations between the group members, the worker also tries to stimulate reciprocal relations between the group and himself.

The social group method is a process based on the relationship which is established between the worker and the members of the group he serves. It is through his professional use of this relationship that the members of the group-as-a-whole are helped to achieve their personal and corporate purposes. The success of the social group work method depends upon the worker's wisdom and discretion in developing the interpersonal relationship within the group and with other groups.<sup>2</sup>

The social worker cannot be expected to "love" every member, but it

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Phillips, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 85.

is expected that he possess a love of human beings or his services will have no value. The term used by Wilson and Ryland applied to the attitude of social workers to those whom they serve, is that of "professionally regarding."<sup>1</sup>

The November and December meetings of the Starlighters seemed to be very productive. The leader showed an interest in the group by meeting with it regularly and guiding the members' discussions.

At one of the meetings the group had shown some deviant behavior in a meeting and this was discussed. The workers comment was, "I feel that the group can make important strides. Also they feel that since they are the oldest girls' group here they should act accordingly." It is hoped that this type of attitude will be maintained throughout the meeting and wherever they go.

The members feel loved and accepted by the worker because his tested reactions to them have proved that he does not stop loving them when he disapproves of their behavior. This is the essence of the attitude of the professional worker. Not only must he be able to intellectually regard behavior as symptomatic of the individuals adjustment to the tensions caused by conflicting drives of hostility<sup>2</sup> and friendliness, but he must have this concept emotionally.

During the latter part of January and the February meetings the leader and group relationship improved. There was more "getting to know each other" on the part of the worker and the group members. The worker was more able to accept the group and the behavior in terms of symptoms of the members interests and needs.

January, 1958

There is a conflict between C. and G. seems to be the scapegoat

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<sup>1</sup> Gertude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

for the group. A., V. and GC. seem to have a mutual interest in the conflict, but the majority of the others seem to be teaming with C. They do not bother G., but tend to urge her and C. to argue. The wrestling and boxing evidently was one way of doing this and when I realized this I asked them to stop. The group members need controls as far as language and need to learn and accept a more socially approved feminine role. The group also needs to learn to work together for a common purpose of having a club and not regard their own personal feeling as much as they do. Although there was dissension among the members I feel that they accepted my comments in a favorable way and that I have not felt any open rejection by any of the members.

...the worker must be free to regard behavior only as symptomatic of the members' interest and needs. Any other concern about behavior will blind his eyes, stop his ears, and dull his feelings to the real meaning of the behavior he is seeking to understand.<sup>1</sup>

During the remaining period of time, March, April and May, the former leader returned. Because of her previous association with the group, and not overlooking the contributions of the previous leader, it was not difficult to re-establish the relationship.

The first Teenager leader had a much better opportunity to establish relationships, due to the fact that she was with the group a longer period of time than any of the other leaders and could be (in a way) considered permanent for six months. The leader began where the group was, permitting it to discuss past experiences and to build on them.

...informal conversation and discussion are integral parts of the life of any group and are vital to the development of the members. Frequently the discussion stimulated by the activity is of more value of the members than the activity itself. The worker stands ready to appraise the relative value of continuing the activity or developing leads for discussion. These discussions center around any of the interests, problems and experiences of the members.<sup>2</sup>

The leader and the group continued planning and working together. By

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<sup>1</sup>  
Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 155-56.



way of showing a personal interest in each girl, the leader was able to achieve much more than the leaders of the Starlighters. In the role of leader she participated with the girls in all of their activities.

When the second leader arrived the girls accepted her with subtle rejection. At the end of the first months meeting the leader wrote:

March, 1959

The girls do not have the discipline or cooperation that is required in order to accomplish anything. They understand that in order to keep their group going, they must have an adult leader, but seem to forget that they must work with that leader, therefore, the cooperation that is expected of them is lacking.

The type of relationship that shall exist between the worker and the group rests a great deal on how the group accepts the worker. In beginnings there is always a testing of the worker. How the worker deals with the group at this point will have an important place in the future relationship of the group and the worker.

The attendance at the first meeting was low; however, the leader took an interest in each girl personally. This kept the group together and gave the worker a focal point. The worker was quite concerned with attitudes and behavior of the group as a whole and this was what her focuses were on. The girls talked with her freely as a group and individually. At the end of April the leader's comment on the group was:

April, 1959

The girls are beginning to realize that I am on their side, so to speak and am willing to help them with their ideas. Already they are planning and prepared to schedule more events than we actually have time to work out.

The relationship between the worker and the group, of the Starlighters and the Teenagers, at various times, was very close. At other times they seemed to be at opposite poles of relationship. Each leader saw the group from a different perspective and attempted to meet the needs that she saw.

The color of the leader did not seem to make any difference with the group, in so far as, relationships were concerned, but there was a difference in the type of relationship established due to the skills that the leader possessed.

The type of professional leadership of intercultural groups is extremely important if attitudes are to be changed or altered in the area of intergroup relations. Saint Martha's Houses' use of social work students has been a step in the right direction; however, these students, too, have to have certain understandings in order to work with groups of this type. The use of education majors too, is a progressive approach, however, because of the various attitudes stemming from the different backgrounds, these students, too, are handicapped.

In several instances, the leaders of both the Starlighters and the Teenagers attempted to facilitate intergroup relations. However, due to the inconsistent use of self, and the inability to cope with certain situation the writer could not say that better intergroup relationships between the worker and group were established.

In the case of the education majors there was a great deal of trauma associated with having to meet with a group alone. This was usually the first experience of this type for them and chief emphasis was focused on behavior problems and program media. The beginning or testing stage for some leaders last the entire time they are with the group. With the leader's attempting to pass the beginning stage, relationships between the group and the leader to the degree wherein he can help them in conflict situations, is never reached.

The fact that leaders were not with the group for a long period of

time (eight months) could also be a reason for the inability of the leader to establish a relationship with the group. When it does appear that the group and the leader were forming a relationship, the leader had to leave and a new one arrived, who begins again at the beginning stage. Nevertheless, if a person who is fully aware of the aspects of establishing relationships, aware of self and his own attitudes concerning other ethnic groups, uses his learning to facilitate intergroup relations, the length of time with a group might not matter. On the other hand, if the groups are going to work toward better intergroup relations feelings of belonging have to be strengthened. Having worked with, talked with and discussed the problem with the children and the staff, it is the writers opinion that use of the same leader would help the sense of belonging. This, in turn, would give the leader and the children the chance to work on leader-group relationships and finally relationships to other ethnic groups.

#### Relationship Toward Other Ethnic Groups

Ethnic consciousness and awareness come from many sources in our American society. The home is one of the chief sources.

The family exerts a strong influence on the child's personality and his life outlook. By its chosen and cherished ways the family builds either feelings of security and acceptance or feelings of dissatisfaction and resentment. Sometimes a family most concerned for decent human relations may in its child rearing follow the very approach most conducive to the creation of hostility and suspicion toward others.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the home, the school also becomes a testing ground for the dissolving of ethnic prejudices.

Across the school's threshold may lie coldness, rejection, indifference, enforced conformity; or across it may lie

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<sup>1</sup> William Kilpatrick and William Van Til, op. cit., p. 243.

acceptance of the importance of good relations, knowledge that a child is what he has lived, recognition that mere uniformity of treatment creates conflict and denies freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Motion pictures, too, play an important part, since they are often conveyers of ethnic stereotypes. Many phrases, names and actions are taken from the theaters to the everyday play of the children. The groups stereotyped in the motion pictures appear very defensive and retaliate instantaneously. Many children repeat these statements with really no basis for prejudice.

In the teenagers, D., a Negro girl informed the group of the expected arrival of two new members.

October, 1958

D. said that the twins were coming tonight. She said that D.G. had told her that they were coming. G. wanted to know what twins they were, she wondered if they were the same twins she knew in school. She asked D. if they went to their school? D. said that there was only one set of twins in their school. G. said that they were the ones she knew and she hated them. She went on to describe the girls...G. reiterated that she hated these girls. I said that if she felt that way about them I hoped that she didn't let them know it tonight when they come. I asked C. if she knew them? She said that she did. I asked how she liked them? She said, they were all right. I asked G. why she hated them? G. said that they always act so innocent, but when they left school they smoked like everybody else. She said later that probably she just hated their attitude and not them. I said, I am glad you brought the matter of attitude and I hope you realize that your attitude at the moment is not good.

G's attitude concerning the twins, who were white, had no basis.

When she forced to think about the reasons why she really disliked them, she was given the opportunity to do some constructive thinking, and to formulate, the decision made on her own, that it was the twins' attitude she hated and not really the girls.

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William Kilpatrick and William Van Til, op. cit., p. 244.

If children are permitted the freedom to talk about their feelings concerning ethnic group attitudes, with a mature adult, many false conceptions they have can be channeled, giving them the choice of rejecting or accepting impressions. Even if the new conceptions are rejected the thought will still be on their minds and perhaps with time and some positive experiences the conceptions of the children concerning other ethnic groups will be modified.

The professional worker's role with interracial groups is like that of the detached worker dealing with hostile gangs. He must understand his place in the situation and be able to withstand testing which call attention to his race or group identification; he needs to accept all members and to be "scrupulously fair." This is especially true in areas where tension is high and every move watched.<sup>1</sup>

The writer found in the Philadelphia area that the problem of ethnic group relations was widespread. Through personal interviews the writer was able to find out what other agencies were experiencing.

In Neighborhood Centre South, whose agency racial composition was Italian and Jewish, the Branch Director stated:

In the younger groups' friendship clubs there is a great deal of mixing with no prejudice shown on the part of the children. This is also true in interest groups and athletic programs. Both Italian and Jewish boys and girls attend the dances. However, the Italian girl will dance with the Jewish boys, but the Jewish girl will not dance with the Italian boys. Parental attitudes and influences prevent the mixing of the Jewish girls and Italian boys.<sup>2</sup>

Parental attitudes were further confirmed by the Girls' Activity Director of Redd Street Neighborhood House.

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<sup>1</sup>

Arthur Hillman, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

<sup>2</sup>

Bernard Plawsky, Branch Director, Neighborhood Centre South, statement at personal interview (November 8, 1960).

Two Italian girls had belonged to the agency several years and were not participating in a club activity. The worker visited the home and the father consented to let the girls come back. When the girls came back, one provoked a fight with a Negro member and went home crying. The worker, knowing the father and the girl, knew what the incident would develop into and did not follow through with a home visit. The mother is quite different in attitudes, but the father, an older generation Italian, had the last word in the household.<sup>1</sup>

The controversial nature of ethnic group relations has become one of the most challenging problems confronting agencies utilizing the social work method today. Many agencies tend to overlook or in various ways delay attacking the problem. This solves the problem partially, but the repercussions that occur later would not seem to warrant the forestalling of the inevitable.

When the members of the Negro community started coming to Saint Martha's House in large numbers, the white membership began to get smaller and smaller, until, at the time of this study, special efforts had to be exerted to get the white members to attend. There was nothing in the by-laws of the agency that stated there must be a balance; nevertheless, if no attempt were made to get the white members into the agency, it would not be serving the total community.

Attitudes are continually supported by outside forces such as, the home, the school and the peer group or gang. It is extremely hard for a child to go against the sanctions of parents or the peer group, if he is to exist in the community or the home. Nevertheless, it would be useless for social workers to continue their work with people were they not impressed by the idea that change is possible.

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<sup>1</sup>

Statement by Gretchen Nave, Girl's Activity Director, Reed Street Neighborhood House, personal interview (November 4, 1960).

Americans have an inexhaustible faith in environmentalism. We brush aside the aristocratic biases that blood will tell, that caste and caste attitudes are imperishable. We believe in the efficiency of education...with optimism we overhaul our school curricula, launch publicity campaigns and march forth to slay attitudinal dragons...our faith in environmentalism itself is a factor of prime importance. If everyone expects attitudes to change through re-training, then of course, they <sup>1</sup> are more likely to do so than if no one expects them to change.

It is the writers opinion that attitudes concerning other ethnic groups in the South Philadelphia area were extremely strong, on the negative side. The Negroes resented the white members and felt that the agency treated the white membership better than the Negro. On the other hand the white members did not want to associate with the Negro members because they were considered boisterous and did not know how to act. The groups merely tolerated each other because they lived in the same area and had to attend the same schools.<sup>2</sup>

There was an attempt made by the leader of the Teenagers to help the group discuss its feelings about other ethnic groups. In other records instances such as this were either non-existent or were not recorded by the worker. The writer,, therefore, cannot say, on the basis of the record material that better relations toward other ethnic groups was not established. However, the writer, because of her own experiences with similar groups, is aware that instances do occur that need mature adult interpretation. With discussions with supervisors these situation can be relieved

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<sup>1</sup>  
Gordon Allport, "Resolving Intergroup Tensions, An Appraisal of Methods," Toward Better Human Relations (Detroit, 1952), pp. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup>  
Discussion in staff meeting, Saint Martha's House (October, 1960).

and the worker would not have to feel reluctant to record the situations. When a subsequent situation occurred the worker would be better prepared to handle it and perhaps help the group toward better ethnic group relations.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken to ascertain whether or not belonging to groups in Saint Martha's Settlement House tended to facilitate ethnic group relations. In attempting to make an assessment of group membership two teenage groups at Saint Martha's Settlement House, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, were studied. One of these groups was composed of Negro members, the other was composed of Negro and white members. From the study conclusions were drawn as follows:

1. There are many factors in the community that can precipitate hostile feelings. One of these is technological changes, which may require the use of one or more groups, considered newcomers in occupations previously held by a majority group.

2. Social agencies, which function on a neighborhood basis, have found it necessary to relate their programs to meeting the needs of the newcomers, who are recipients of the hostile feelings. These agencies have used working with people in groups, in the agency and on a community level, as a focal point for relating them to the new community.

3. Group work in social work has the techniques and action programs which can help to ease the adjustment of individuals in their moving into new situations. Social workers and social work agencies, because of their convictions as to the worth of the individual and their strategic position in the community, are compelled to put their convictions into practice.

4. Charity and philanthropy were the keystones of early activities at Saint Martha's House. With the passing of years other agencies took over various community needs that the agency was meeting and the program of the agency was changed. The focus was now on helping the individual to develop so that he might function better in his group and also to help the people in the community to help themselves.

5. It has been established by writer after writer that belonging is a voluntary response freely given. Given free choice an individual who stays with the group would be said to have a stronger resultant force acting on him to remain in the group than would an individual who leaves the group.

Both in the Starlighters an all Negro group, and in the Teenagers, a racially mixed group, the low attraction for the eight month period was higher than that of high attraction. Specifically, each group in terms of attendance as an index to cohesiveness showed: in the Starlighters the low attraction for the eight month period totaled thirty-nine. In the Teenagers the low attraction for the eight month period totaled forty-two. This would indicate that the feeling of belonging was not developed to a high degree.

6. The study further revealed in relation to cohesiveness in terms of activities, that the activities chosen by the groups were in some respects limiting and did not give the children the opportunity to associate with any groups outside of their own. Those activities such as, parties, picnics, dances, fashion shows, were mainly designed to build the groups own relationships. The Teenagers did participate in outside activities such as, gameroom, lounge activities, Christmas caroling, cake and candy sales, etc., which did bring the group into contact with other groups. However, even

with this group these types of activities were limited. The study therefore revealed that most of the activities chosen by the groups were those which tended to build the groups own relationships. Activities bringing the groups into contact with groups outside of themselves would tend to facilitate better ethnic group relations.

7. Aside from focusing his efforts on reciprocal relations between the group members, the worker also tried to stimulate reciprocal relations between the group and himself. The fact that strong relationships were not established or were not apparent were attributed to the inexperience of the leaders, the newness of the situation, the attitude of the children, and frequent changes in leaders. Social work students seemed aware of how to facilitate relationships, but they were not transferred to the next leader.

8. The study indicated that there was limited mixing of the races by the groups due to forces outside of themselves. Forces such as, parents, school, gangs or peer groups, movies and the church were influential. The leaders, most of them not having previous experiences with groups of this type did not handle or did not record the situations accordingly.

The writer concluded that definite planning is essential to develop better intergroup relations. The selection of leaders to work with such group, who are capable of increasing the sense of belonging should be given special consideration as one step in planning. The nature of the activities the frequency of contact, and the support of the environmental setting are contributing elements in the furtherance of intergroup relationships.

Finally, a basic concern of the social group work method is the development of the inner growth of the individual through cooperative living with

his peers. Social group work has the techniques, the structure and the idealism for facilitating intergroup relations; nevertheless, dealing with the tensions and prejudices constructively, demands consistent endeavors.

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